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CPYRGHT

CIA, The International Champ

WE'LL HAVE to accept at face value President Johnson's statement the other day that the Central Intelligence Agency is the "best in the world."

The occasion was the 20th anniversary of the CIA, the first real full-scale intelligence service the nation has had.

If it is the best in the world, that's wonderful. But after some of its notable failures — which included the Bay of Pigs and the delayed detection of Soviet missile sites in Cuba, to mention only a few — that is not very flattering to the

cloak and dagger agencies of other nations, free world or communist.

Unlike football teams, the spectator can't even argue whose system is best. Except for occasional revelations, such as the U-2 incident and the student front organization backed by CIA, we know very little of its wins and losses.

Thus, when LBJ ranks CIA as No. 1, there is none to challenge the championship ranking. The other contenders aren't talking.